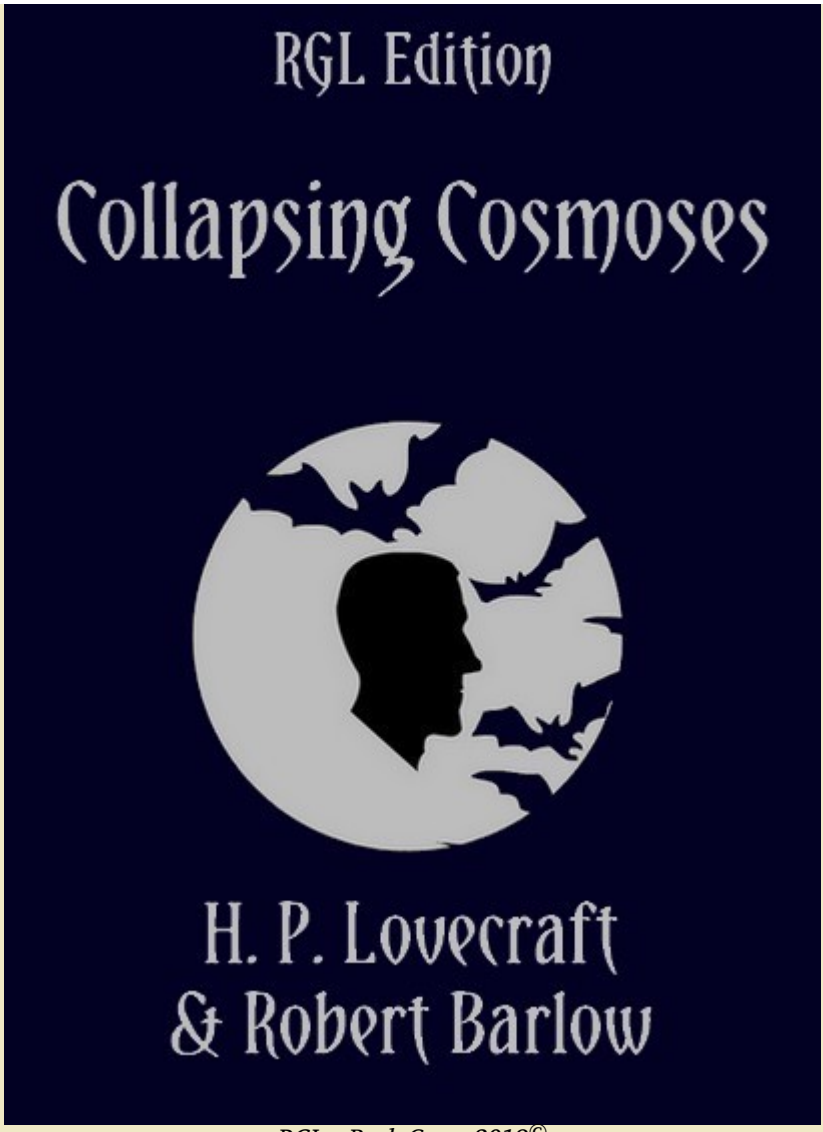
RGL Edition

Collapsing Cosmoses

H. P. Lovecraft
& Robert Barlow



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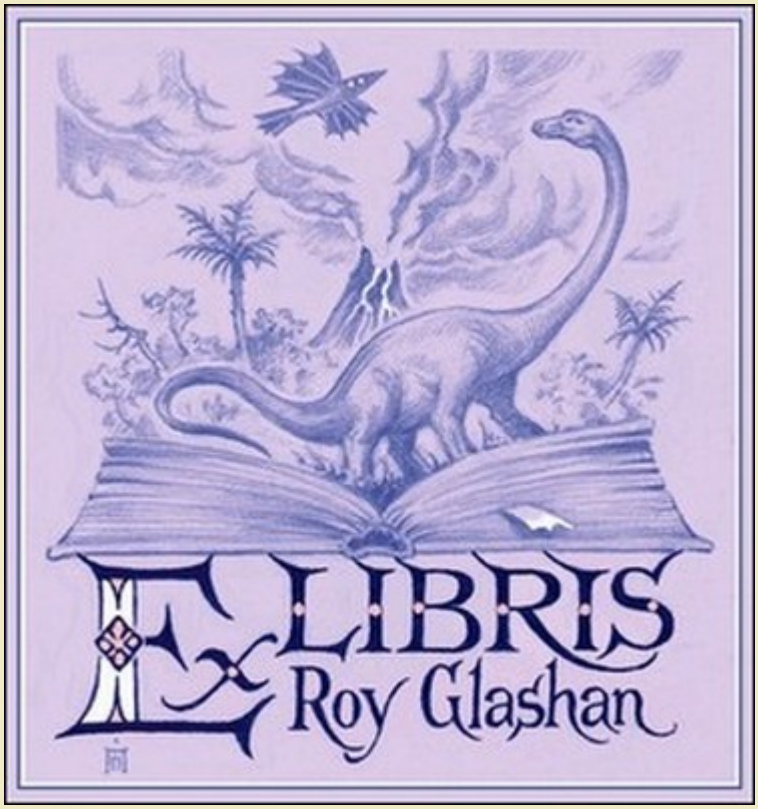

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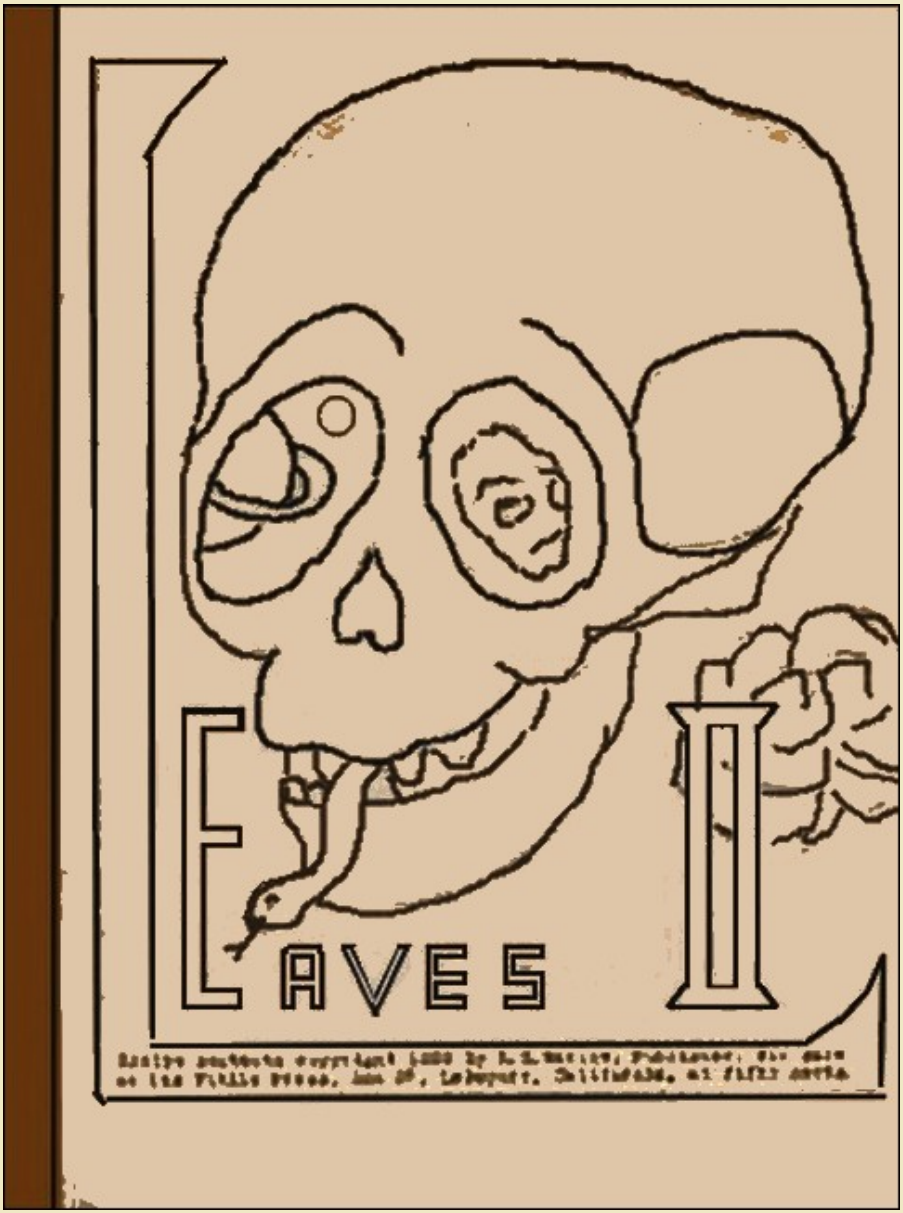

Leaves, No.2, Winter 1938, with "Collapsing Cosmoses"

DAM BOR glued each of his six eyes to the lenses of the cosmoscope. His nasal tentacles were orange with fear, and his antennae buzzed hoarsely as he dictated his report to the operator behind him. "It has come!" he cried. "That blur in the ether can be nothing less than a fleet from outside the space-time continuum we know. Nothing like this has ever appeared before. It must be an enemy. Give the alarm to the Inter-

Cosmic Chamber of Commerce. There's no time to lose—at this rate they'll be upon us in less than six centuries. Hak Ni must have a chance to get the fleet in action at once."

[I glanced up from the *Windy City Grab-Bag*, which had beguiled my inactive peace-time days in the Super-Galactic Patrol. The handsome young vegetable, with whom I shared my bowl of caterpillar custard since earliest infancy, and with whom I had been thrown out of every joint in the intradimensional city of Kastor-Ya,] had really a worried look upon his lavender face. After he had given the alarm we jumped on our ether-bikes and hastened across to the outer planet on which the Chamber held its sessions.

[Within the Great Council Chamber, which measured twenty-eight square feet (with quite a high ceiling), were gathered delegates from all the thirty-seven galaxies of our immediate universe. Oll Stof, President of the Chamber and representative of the Milliner's Soviet, raised his eyeless snout with dignity] and prepared to address the assembled multitude. He was a highly developed protozoan organism from Nov-Kos, and spoke by emitting alternate waves of heat and cold.

["Gentlemen," he radiated, "a terrible peril has come upon us which I feel I must bring to your attention."

Everybody applauded riotously, as a wave of excitement rippled through the variegated audience; those who were handless slithering their tentacles together.

He continued: "Hak Ni, crawl upon the dais!"

There was a thunderous silence, during which a faint prompting was heard] from the dizzy summit of the platform. [Hak Ni, the yellow-furred and valorous commander of our ranks through numerous installments, ascended to the towering peak inches above the floor.

"My friends—" he began, with an eloquent scraping of his posterior limbs, "these treasured walls and pillars shall not mourn on my account...." At this point, one of his numerous relatives cheered. "Well do I remember when..."

Oll Stof interrupted him.] "You have anticipated my thoughts and orders. Go forth and win for dear old Inter-Cosmic."

[Two paragraphs later found us soaring out past innumerable stars toward where a faint blur half a million light-years long marked the presence of the hated enemy, whom we had not

seen. What monsters of malformed grotesqueness seethed out there among the moons of infinity, we really didn't know, but there was a malign menace in the glow that steadily increased until it spanned the entire heavens. Very soon we made out separate objects in the blur. Before all my horror-stricken vision-areas there spread an endless array of scissors-shaped spaceships of totally unfamiliar form.

Then from the direction of the enemy there came a terrifying sound, which I soon recognized as a hail and a challenge. An answering thrill crept through me as I met with uplifted antennae this threat of battle with a monstrous intrusion upon our fair system from unknown outside abysses.]

At the sound, [which was something like that of a rusty sewing-machine, only more horrible,] Hak Ni too raised his snout in defiance, radiating a masterful order to the captains of the fleet. Instantly the huge space-ships swung into battle formation, with only a hundred or two of them many light-years out of line.

H. P. LOVECRAFT
ROBERT H. BARLOW
TWO COLLOBORATIONS
COLLAPSING & COSMOSES
THE BATTLE THAT ENDED THE CENTURY

THE END